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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a discussion of various definitions of retrospective bibliography; a comparison of retrospective and current national bibliographies, both in countries with an established publishing tradition and in developing countries; a brief examination of the development of retrospective bibliographies from current national bibliographies; and remarks on retrospective bibliography in the context of proposed activities of the Section on Bibliography of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). The production of retrospective bibliographies by gathering of documents or compilation from other bibliographies is examined, as well as the various options for content, arrangement, and method of production. The formation of a small informal working group to produce guidelines for compilers of retrospective bibliographies is recommended, and two questionnaires to be used for obtaining data on retrospective bibliographies by country are provided. (ESR)

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Retrospective bibliographies: state-of-the-art and comperative report

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From the beginning, the Section on Bibliography has worked mainly on current national bibliographies, as recommended by UBC. The Section has contributed to the success of the Paris Conference of 1977, in particular with the preparatory surveys conducted by Mr Pomassl, who was President at the time. Following the publication of the Paris Conference conclusions, i.e. its recommendations on the coverage and the structure of current national bibliographies, and the activities of the informal Working group organized around Mr. Cybulski on levels of coverage of documents in current bibliographies which will finish its work during this year, the Standing Committee of the Section had decided to look into the various problems of retrospective bibliographies : this decision appears in the Medium Term Program 1981-1985. As all other Section's activities, it will come into existence after two preliminary actions : there will be a state-of-the-art report followed by some recommendations on the contents and presentation which will be submitted to the Professionnal Board for approval.

The present paper should therefore be considered as an introduction to the state-of-the-art report on retrospective bibliographies; it expresses the personal position of the author. The complexity of the subject is obvious : the existing situation varies from country to country, what is the proper definition of a retrospective bibliography, what are the best methods for producing and compiling such a bibliography.

This paper is divided as follows :

I. What is a retrospective bibliography ?

II. Retrospective bibliographies as separated from current national bibliographies.

III. Retrospective bibliographies as outcome of current national bibliographies.

IV. Remarks and proposals for Section's activities on retrospective bibliographies.

We will talk again of the second stage which should fall into the competence of a Joint Working Group for a more fruitful cooperation with other sections and bodies of IFLA (UBC Office, Section on cataloguing and classification).

I. What is a retrospective bibliography ?

When looking in library literature, we do not find much on the theoretical definition of retrospective bibliography. Indeed, it seems that retrospective bibliography has always been "defined" as a bibliography compiled at a certain time about a past period. Reality must moderate such a simple definition.

Should we , following Knud Larsen[1], say retrospective national bibliography only when talking of the coverage of printed production prior to the beginning of current national bibliography ? Or, as Louise-Noelle Malclès said[2], should we consider that "when absorbing the contents of current national bibliography of several years, five, ten, twenty years or more, retrospective bibliographies become the keepers of the cultural property of nations preserving its mark for all eternity"?

These two positions seem almost in opposition but are really complementary although coming from a completely different production.

For the first conception, there must be in most cases first-hand cataloguing after exhaustive research necessary for the gathering or at least the location of documents. In fewer cases, it is indeed re-cataloguing from previous partial bibliographies or catalogs. Both cases existed in the 18th and 19th century for bibliographies compiled by isolated bibliographers in countries with a long publishing tradition. The same situation may be found to-day in some Third World countries recently independent who are trying to locate documents which were published during the colonial period.

The second conception represents a simple compilation of bibliographic records which already exist in the current bibliography; the reorganization of these records may present some specific problems which we will examine later.

In both cases, the main question is the role of retrospective bibliographies, since it is this role which determines the presentation. At first, we would be tempted to accept, as L.-N. Malclès did, that retrospective bibliographies aim at information, statistics, identification but not at information retrieval. Then, they naturally appear as alphabetic inventories. We will see that for production reasons, mainly financial, the presentation is not exactly identical.

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(1) LARSEN (Knud). - National bibliographic services, in Essays on bibliography./ comp. and ed. by Vito J. Brenni. - Metuchen, N.J.,the Scarecrow Press, 1975.

(2) MALCLES (Louise-Noelle). - Manuel de bibliographie.- 3e éd.- Paris,PUF,1976.

II. Retrospective bibliographies as separated from current national bibliographies.

For a better understanding of the difficulties encountered when producing such bibliographies, we must remember that the situation is quite different in countries with an old publishing tradition and in Third World countries which have recently become independent. The existence and the importance of retrospective bibliographies which may be found or which should be compiled in each country are closely linked to the date of publication of the first book printed in the country, and to the date of political independence of this country with its current structures and territorial limits.

1) Countries with an old publishing tradition

From the moment of its invention, printing allowed a greater dissemination of knowledge. The first printed books appeared at various dates depending on the countries. They first appeared in China, and then, from the 15th century, in the Western World and elsewhere : Bamberg in 1460, Mexico in 1563, Japan in 1590, Cambridge,Mass. in 1638, Constantinople in 1727, Australia in 1784. In all these countries, we find a publishing production spread over several centuries. Coverage of this production exists in a number of countries, sometimes as early as the 18th century, in most cases during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. It was the work of isolated bibliographers with tremendous good will but with limited means who, with the exception of some tireless travellers, compiled library and publishers' catalogs, general and specialized bibliographies. This compilation was necessarily incomplete due to lack of information and it was at the time deliberately so, since these bibliographers tended to limit the publishing production "worthy of coverage" to literary production : they neglected, in many instances, scientific and technical texts. Therefore, important supplements have been necessary for these old retrospective bibliographies. Countries such as Australia (1784-1900), France 1700-1925), the Federal Republic of Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Rumania (1508-1890), USSR and Yugoslavia have, since the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, retrospective bibliographies covering extensive periods of time.(1)

Official institutions, in many cases the National Library, have taken up the work of scholarly bibliographers in the second half of the 20th century

(1) References to all the bibliographies quoted in this paper may be found in the various editions of "Bibliographic Services in the World "(1960-1964/1965-1969, by P. Avicenne, 1970-1974/1975-1979,(in the press), by M. Beaudiquez).

in order to continue the compilation of retrospective bibliographies and to fill in the gaps in the bibliographic coverage, but without any kind of standardization. This has been the case in Iceland (1897→), China, Italy (1886→), Israel (→1960), New Zealand (→1960), Poland, Portugal and the Ukraine. Although it is a commercial undertaking, we may include here the very important retrospective bibliography which is now being "re-published" in the Federal Republic of Germany from pre-existing publications : Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschesprachigen Schrifttums(1700-1965), in two separate chronological series. Let us also mention the work of the National Library of Quebec which has started to publish its retrospective bibliography from 1821 to 1967.

Besides these interesting publications which are in a way "traditional", we must note a unique achievement, the National Union Catalog, prepared by the Library of Congress. Strictly speaking, it is not a retrospective bibliography but a union catalog. However, we all know, in the United States and elsewhere, that it is the most important retrospective catalog, at least for the part prior to 1956. In this immense repertory where are recorded over 12 million documents from all countries and in all languages, future bibliographers of countries where there is no retrospective bibliography will easily identify records of their own publications since these publications had been received either by the Library of Congress or by one of the 900 libraries from North America which take part in this enterprise.

Another interesting development in this field which is much more recent and which uses the latest techniques, is carried out in Canada. The retrospective bibliography, from 1751, date of the first printed book in Canada, to 1950, is produced by computer : descriptive data are input in order to produce microfiches by type of document and by period. For instance, the coverage of monographs from 1867 to 1900 is available on microfiches COM similar to those of the current bibliography.

2) Third World countries

The situation is quite different in countries which have recently become independent, and it varies greatly from country to country. If we consider that the national retrospective bibliography of these countries (but this point may be questionnable) should begin with the first printing press in the country, even if at the time this country was under colonial rule, the coverage may be quite important.

There are several possibilities . If nothing has been done by the country - this is the case for Barbados, Burma, Cyprus,Dominica, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Grenada, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaya, Mali, Uganda, Papua, Qatar, Cameroons, Seychelles, Togo and Yemen - in many instances, documents published in the country have been included in the national bibliography of the colonial power and may therefore be easily identified. In many cases also, partial and specialized publications have been carried out by foreign bibliographers. Here again, we cannot call them retrospective national bibliographies since they cover not only the documents published in the country but also documents about the country published elsewhere; in most cases, they are thematic bibliographies including books and articles. They are however important elements which could serve as foundations for the production of retrospective national bibliographies. This is the case for Saudi Arabia, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Upper Volta, Koweit, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and Sudan.

We must make a special note for two achievements : a retrospective bibliography from 1500 to 1976 is now being published by successive periods in the Congo Republic; scholars have already published for Mauritius a bibliography from 1502 to 1954 (Toussaint and Adolphe in 1956) without any connection with the current bibliography.

II. Retrospective bibliographies as outcome of current national bibliographies

As soon as a current national bibliography exists, the constitution of retrospective bibliographies is facilitatedsince it is sufficient to publish cumulative editions for five, ten, twenty years or more. This has been the practice in the United States for many years for commercial bibliographies, in Canada, in the United Kingdom for commercial bibliographies, in Italy, in Switzerland , in France for commercial bibliographies and in the SSR of Byelorussia. In the Netherlands, the situation is significant : the commercial current bibliography, which is the only Dutch bibliography, published since 1846, appears in multi-annual volumes then five-year cumulations since 1850, allowing for a wide coverage for identification (arrangement by author and title) and for documentation (subject headings).

There are annual and multi-annual cumulatives in several Third World countries : Guiana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Nigeria, Peru, Thailand and Tunisia..

As we said earlier, there has been no real concern about standardization when producing these cumulations but only financial reasons, once it was admitted that they were necessary for information retrieval.

Therefore, these cumulative volumes are at times a true reorganization of the current bibliography (same contents, same arrangement), at times an alteration of this bibliography, alteration bearing on the form (arrangement) or the contents (suppression or addition of some documents : theses, official publications, works in the language of the country or about the country published in other countries...)

III. Remarks and proposals for Section's activities on retrospective bibliographies

1. Retrospective bibliographies as separated from the current bibliography

We will not deal at length with the normative aspect concerning retrospective bibliographies of countries with an old publishing tradition : these bibliographies are in existence and there is no question about doing over what has already been done. We must insist however on the fact that, for almost all countries, it is necessary to complete the periods already covered in order to cover all the printed production since its origins. We must add that research should be done to complete the existing bibliographies by including the documents which had been deliberately left out, as we noted earlier (scientific and technical publications, children's books...) These supplements will certainly need a considerable amount of work and they will probably be the task of scholars more than bibliographers since they will be able to work on short periods with parallel research.

a) Constitution of retrospective bibliographies by the gathering of documents

This is the most delicate and the most difficult task : as a first step, it is a constant search for documents which may be scattered all over the country and in other countries. Financial means for this search must be important because it means the reconstitution of the national collection even before the compilation of the bibliography. This is not a realistic solution when we take into account financial restrictions. Let us note, however, the initiative of the National Library of Australia where is now being prepared a retrospective bibliography for the years 1901-1950 without any previous cataloguing.

b) Constitution of retrospective bibliographies by compilation

In most cases, the retrospective national bibliography is produced by compiling international and/or existing specialized bibliographies. For each country, bibliographers should analyze and index the National Union Catalog, the Catalogue of the British Museum, the bibliography of the colonial power, various specialized bibliographies. Thus they will be able to identify and cover a large number of documents. This will mean again a great amount of work for incomplete results. Let us mention here New Zealand where the retrospective bibliography fromthe origins to 1960 is being prepared, entirely secondhand, by compilation. In Sweden, the period from 1700 to 1829 which was not covered, is now being published.

The question of cataloguing and arrangement remains whatever the mode of production of these retrospective bibliographies. Inasmuch as descriptive records come from bibliographies and catalogs compiled at various times, cataloguing rules differ and records are more or less complete. Will it be necessary to revise cataloguing according to current rules, try to complete the existing records or keep the records as they are? Filing and arrangement have the same problems.

2. Retrospective bibliographies as outcome of current bibliographies

Studying the question of production of cumulative volumes of current bibliographies designed for the constitution of retrospective bibliographies falls in the scope of the Section on Bibliography. But the existing situations are so diversified that the few remarks herebelow are mostly questions with some attempts at solutions since it is clear that final solutions should come from detailed joint study.

Unesco and IFLA , specially after the Paris Conference of 1977, recommended that current national bibliographies be arranged with a systematic filing for average information retrieval, completed by author and title index for easier identifications.

There has been no detailed study of the arrangement of annual cumulative volumes and nothing at all about multi-annual cumulations. Let us point out right away that production of retrospective bibliographies as well as of current bibliographies is made easier by data processing. However, this is a technical improvement which has no bearing on the decisions concerning the form and the contents of retrospective bibliographies. They ought to be

defined after due consideration of the needs of users and of the role of these bibliographic tools. Automation is a good backing for information and facilitates the preparatory work but it should not determine the arrangement.

There are many automated bibliographies in various countries : some multi-annual cumulations with contents similar to those of the current bibliography are published on COM microfiches, in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Denmark, in Finland (annual volumes), in the Democratic Republic of Germany. We should mention here the automated retrospective MARC file of the British Library from 1950 to 1975 with Dewey class numbers.

a) Contents of retrospective bibliographies

Should these contents be identical to the current biliography? Should some records be taken out or, on the contrary, should some be added? These two possibilities may be found in present publications : in certain cases, the retrospective bibliography is not as complete as the current bibliography because supplements for specific documents do not appear in the cumulation. Conversely, some documents appear only in the cumulative volumes and not in the issues of the current bibliography. There are two types of such documents : special documents for example theses or maps, and documents about the country or in the language of the country but published in other countries.

Thus, in Denmark, cumulations include coverage of publications from Greenland and from the Faroe Islands. Spanish cumulations include periodicals and series while Peruvian ones add bibliographies. In Iceland, is now being prepared an important bibliography which will include books, manuscripts, periodical articles, microfilms, maps and prints.

It might seem, at first, a good idea to recommend that the contents of the current bibliography be kept without alterations when producing a retrospective bibliography, in order to make things as clear and as logical as possible. The three indispensable types of documents would then be covered, namely books, serials and official publications. However, it would be profitable to find the means to retain all other documents; this could be done with a detailed introduction and the necessary diacritics for identification.

b) Arrangement of the retrospective bibliography

To-day, we still find systematic filing, mostly in annual cumulative volumes, as well as dictionary filing. These two types of arrangement are rarely to be found in multi-annual volumes (e.g. the American Cumulative Book Index ahs a dictionary filing). The general practice is an alphabetical

list subdivided in two parts : authors / corporate authors in one part, all titles in the other part (e.g. la Librairie Française). This filing, which facilitates identifications, is often completed by an alphabetical index of key words and subject headings, e.g. the Federal Republic of Germany and the Democratic Republic of Germany. This might be the best solution : identifications are completed by information retrieval.

c) Production of the retrospective bibliography

When we said that technical problems should not determine the production of current bibliographies, we noted however that with automation, it has become much easier to compile repertories and to generate documentation products such as COM microfiches. When planning an automation program, provision should be made for the output of all descriptive fields and for the addition of a class number on each record - this is rarely so - in order to allow also for systematic filing.

There is no question though, that it is impossible to wait for more or less hypothetic automation programs in most countries before starting work on retrospective bibliographies. Therefore, some decisions must be taken right away about the best production methods.

Conclusion

All through this paper, we have seen that the existing situations form a very complex reality which must be taken into account; on the other hand, there are many questions which may receive several answers.

In order to face such a situation, the author hopes that a small informal Working group made of representatives of the Section on Bibliography, the Section on Cataloguing and Classification, and of a member of the UBC Office will agree to meet to prepare recommendations which will serve as guidelines for future compilers of retrospective bibliographies.

At the beginning of its activity, the Working group could distribute the enclosed questionnaires and thus make a state-of-the-art report; comments and replies would be in time for the Montreal Conference.(1) The Section on Bibliography would be able to make progress in the development of its Medium Term Program. This is the aim and the wish of the author.

Marcelle Beaudiquez

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(1) The author would like to have as many comments as possible about the form and contents of the questionnaire before distribution in order to receive the most useful replies and she would welcome all remarks.

Q 1 RETROSPECTIVE NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES AS SEPARATED FROM CURRENT NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES

NAME OF THE COUNTRY			date of printing of the first book printed in the country : date of the country's independence (if later than the first date) :				
PERIOD OF COVERAGE	AUTHOR COMPILER	TITLE	PUBLISHER AND DATE OF PUBLICATION	TYPES OF DOCUMENTS COVERED	ARRANGEMENT	DESCRIPTIVE RECORD COMPLETE OR NOT	OBSERVATIONS (1)

(1) Please note here differences from the current bibliography : added or left out documents for example...

Q 2 RETROSPECTIVE NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES CONSTITUTED BY MULTI-ANNUAL VOLUMES OF CURRENT NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES

NAME OF COUNTRY

INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMPILATION OF THE CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY
NAME
ADDRESS

INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMPILATION OF THE RETROSPECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY
NAME
ADDRESS

DATE OF FOUNDING OF CURRENT NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
DATE OF COVERAGE OF FIRST MULTI-ANNUAL RETROSPECTIVE VOLUME

CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

TITLE
FREQUENCY

(1) Is there an annual cumulative [index] ? yes ☐ no ☐
If there is, indicate the arrangement

(2) Is there an annual cumulative [volume] ? yes ☐ no ☐
If there is, indicate the TITLE

ARRANGEMENT authors/corporate authors/anonymous works ☐
titles ☐
alphabetic by subject ☐
systematic ☐

Is this arrangement different from the arrangement of the current bibliography ?
yes ☐
no ☐

RETROSPECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

TITLE
FREQUENCY
(1) CONTENTS AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE RETROSPECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY
ARRANGEMENT identical to the arrangement of the current bibliography yes ☐ no ☐
authors/corporate authors/anonymous works ☐
titles ☐

alphabetic by subject ☐

systematic ☐

CONTENTS identical to the contents of the current bibliography yes ☐ no ☐

ADDED DOCUMENTS no ☐

yes ☐

which ?

DOCUMENTS LEFT OUT no ☐

yes ☐

which ?

(2) PRODUCTION OF THE CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

a) TRADITIONAL MANUAL PRODUCTION yes ☐

no ☐

photographic process ☐

other process ☐ which ?

b) COMPILATION BY DATA PROCESSING yes ☐

no ☐

Is the cumulative volume :

a computer print out ☐

a photocomposed volume ☐

c) SOURCE OF DESCRIPTIVE RECORDS OF ADDED DOCUMENTS

first-hand cataloguing ☐

compilation of bibliographies ☐